

BOOK BRIEFS

Man at Prayer, by Roy Gesch. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1970. 113 pages. \$3.50.

This little book contains forty-two prayers that are strikingly different, not only in form but in their honest forthrightness. *Man at Prayer* is for men of action in today's world. It is designed not so much for the man who prays but for the man of prayer, the man "who realizes that by prayer he is in partnership with the Almighty and eternal Lord of heaven and earth" (p. 9). This a bracing exposition that seeks to relate the human predicament to the resources of prayer.

Grace Abounding, A Devotional Autobiography, by Georgia Harkness. Nashville: Abingdon, 1970. 192 pages. \$3.75.

One of America's leading religious teachers and writers shares her experiences by testifying to the encompassing grace of God in her life. Through scripture, prayer, poetry, and meditation, the author takes us on a spiritual pilgrimage embracing early personal background, spiritual conversion, the experiencing of the presence of God in the loveliness of the nature scene, great days for faith as reflected by the seasons of the Christian Year, and memorial tributes to persons of influence in the Christian community. To the reader, this already outstanding American churchwoman cannot but grow in stature.

The Preacher and His Contemporary Task, by D. W. Yohn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969. 159 pages. \$2.95. (paperback)

The author is not concerned with novel experiments or "new modes" of preaching. As he sees it, the churches today are frustrated. "Bewilderment and hyperactivity have unsealed grace and faith" (p. 5). Desperation is seen in the churches' frantic attempts to be "relevant." As though the basic needs of man had changed! The theme throughout

this book is the meaning of sacramental preaching -- "preaching as a channel whereby the grace of God can come into contact with the needs of men" (p. 5). In true preaching, God touches man and man becomes aware that he is touched by God.

The Urgent Now, by James Armstrong. Nashville: Abingdon, 1970. 160 pages. \$3.75.

This book, by a bishop of the United Methodist Church, addresses itself to those who are asking honest, searching questions about the place of the church in today's world. How is the church to respond to the current crises? Will it *react* or will it *act*? Is renewal an impertinence or an imperative? The author sees only one answer. It involves every one of us: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

The Broadman Commentary, edited by C. J. Allen. Vol. IX. Nashville: Broadman Press. 376 pages. \$7.50.

This is one of a twelve-volume commentary on the entire Bible, the whole authored by Southern Baptist scholars, and reputedly the largest publishing venture in the history of Broadman Press. In the present volume, Luke and John are written by Baptist seminary professors, M. O. Tolbert and W. E. Hall respectively.

The general purpose of the set is to help men know the truth as it is revealed in the Word of God. "It seeks to relate the word of God in Scripture and in the living Word to the deep needs of persons in God's world." In all this, it largely succeeds. In this volume, one senses deep regard for the Bible as the word of God. Here too is a happy balance between exegesis and exposition. Resources of biblical scholarship are evident, without ostentation. Practical applications show disciplined insights.

The text of the R.S.V. is used throughout; each Bible book is carefully outlined; and introductory material considers questions of purpose, date, authorship, and setting. This volume should prove a practical handbook to preachers, teachers, and Bible students.

Holy Bible. The New Berkeley Version in Modern English. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969. 1237 pages. \$8.95.

The Berkeley Versions of the New Testament and the Old Testament originally published in 1945 and 1959 respectively, have undergone considerable revision in the *New Version*. The whole is a fresh rendering of the Word in today's language. Twenty evangelical scholars of various denominations, mostly professors of their respective seminaries, labored to prepare this *Berkeley Version*. In the firm conviction that "holy men from God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit," their approach is characterized by fidelity to the original languages.

The language of this volume reflects choice current usage. It is at once lucid and poetic, free from the colloquialism that mar some of the other recent translations. Clarity and dignity are here wedded in remarkable degree. In place of paraphrasing, brief footnotes, informative and devotional, are offered to enrich the meaning of a verse. F. F. Bruce refers to this work as "a masterpiece of evangelical scholarship." It should be of real service to students of the Bible, especially those not versed in the original languages.

The New Man for Our Time, by Elton Trueblood. New York: Harper and Row, 1970. 126 pages. \$2.95.

Trueblood never fails to be both stimulating and helpful. His wide knowledge of theology, philosophy, and modern life combine to make his work useful to the thoughtful Christian, ministerial or lay.

This is a sequel to *A Place to Stand*. The careful reader will notice that some of the ideas in that book are extended and reiterated with fine emphasis. Take for example his plea for intellectual respectability in the earlier work; in the present volume, that theme is picked up in chapter V ("Intellectual Integrity") and beautifully illustrated throughout the book. Or take his apologia for a reformed society; that too is referred to again in *The New Man for Our Time*. Indeed, John Woolman is given considerable space, and that whole potent story is expounded in the light of the real dynamics of our present-day racial dilemma.

Elton Trueblood is an honest man as well as a creative scholar. That honesty comes right through to the modern mind--one reason his works, especially the two referred to in this review, can be used as evangelistic media. Actually, these two books ought to be employed as enlarged tracts, given to men possessed of inquiring minds.

The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, by Gerald Friedlander. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969. 301 pages. \$4.95.

This volume was originally published in 1911 as Friedlander's rebuttal of Montefiore's volume on *The Synoptic Gospels*. In this reprint, Solomon Zeitlin furnishes a prolegomenon in which he sets in perspective the objections raised to Montefiore's *Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount* and also the relation of the sermon to Rabbinic teaching. Zeitlin acknowledges that Friedlander's treatment is polemic and calls for a somewhat milder dialogue between Christian and Jew. He criticizes Friedlander for not exercising historical discipline in his citations from Rabbinic literature.

When Montefiore published a revision of his *Commentary* in 1927, several of the statements challenged by Friedlander were deleted. Friedlander wrote primarily to assist Jews to defend their faith. He did so by attacking Montefiore's commentary as making too many concessions to Christianity rather than defending Judaism against the Christian gospels.

The reader may well ask why the publishers chose to reprint a polemical treatise which is somewhat out of date. There are two reasons which may be urged to justify this publishing venture. One is the continuing interest in Jewish Christian relationships and the contemporary context of inter-faith dialogue. Another reason is that those interested in the Sermon on the Mount can find here many parallels in Jewish literature. The reader, however, needs to be on guard as to chronological sequence; Zeitlin notes that Friedlander did not always keep this in mind in citing parallels. The volume is well printed. It concludes with a helpful index. The numerous citations of primary sources make it a useful manual for students of the Sermon on the Mount.

American Music, by Irving L. Sablosky. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968. 189 pages. \$8.50.

Mr. Sablosky, a foreign service officer of the United States Information Agency and for many years music writer for American journals, has given us a straightforward history of American music. He has lectured at home and abroad on our music, using it as an instrument to explain our culture. The present volume is one in the History of American Civilization series.

The author starts with the earliest beginnings--with the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640) and even earlier--and comes right down to the folk music of

today. It is fascinating to watch him trace our various types of music which grew up, as America did, like topsy. The variety of expression, the confluence of musical modes, and the erupting creativity, all make for a grand and stimulating study.

Take for example the evolution from minstrelsy to opera; whites, made up as colored men, acted out the minstrel role. It was a simple step to take songs like those and tie them together with a theme thread to make musical comedy, from which emerged operetta, then light opera (Victor Herbert was the pioneer), and full fledged opera. Equally interesting is Sablosky's tracing of the development of the modern symphony orchestra, public school music (Lowell Mason was the first superintendent of public school music in America), music clubs, folk expression, etc.

Altogether, this is a book worth reading if one finds himself in the happy position of loving music and craving information about it.

What this reviewer would like to see done in a revised edition is minimal, yet important. First, the style needs to be musical. Why a wooden quality for a musical theme? The book should sing! Second, what about war music beyond World War II? Actually, little war music has been written since World War I. Reasons need exploring. Third, though his treatment of jazz is extensive, he does not mention Glenn Miller, a classic in the field. Why? . . . But, after all, he did cover an immense territory in fewer than 200 text pages!

A splendid dating chart of some extent, a bibliography including primary and interpretive sources, and a fine discography with both earlier and later listening resources--all are provided at the back of the book to please both the serious scholar and the eager amateur.

THE COVENANT: A Theology of Human Destiny, by Jacob Jocz. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 320 pages. \$6.95.

Jacob Jocz, an Anglican clergyman educated in Scotland, is Professor of Systematic Theology at Wycliffe Seminary, Toronto. His earlier work has centered on theological interpretation of the Old Testament with special attention to the theological problems of Jewish-Christian relationships. Here he attempts to develop a more or less comprehensive systematic theology based on the unifying principle of the "covenant." Jocz denies any concern for theological novelty and insists that his only aim is fidelity to the Biblical Revelation. Deploring the lack of consensus in Biblical scholarship, he himself tends to take a moderately conservative critical position.

By "covenant" Jocz means essentially "God's condescension to man" and nearly a fourth of the book is devoted to an exposition of the Old Testament understanding of the term. Though recognizing conditional elements, the author emphasizes the unconditional nature of the covenant and tends to identify election and covenant. Sin is treated as Titanism, pride, and sickness under the rubric "the broken covenant." The New Testament is viewed not as a "new" covenant, but rather as the renewal of the old. A fourth of the book is then devoted to the means of salvation, both the cross and the sacraments. The book concludes with a justification of the author's extensive use of the category of the "covenant."

This is an erudite book. One notable feature is the wide range of thinkers with whom Jocz carries on his discussion. It is also significant in the extent to which it manages to bring together Biblical studies and systematic theology. There are many points at which his perspective is illuminating. But it is doubtful if the concept of the covenant can be made as all-encompassing as Jocz would like to make it. One also wonders at many points if he is not reflecting the thought of Karl Barth as much as the distinctive thought patterns of Scripture. In short, this is a useful but not essential book.